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Women used as Weapons of War in Conflict Zones: A Case Study of Indian Held Kashmir Post 1990

Abstract *'This Qualitative in-depth study aimed to explore whether women are treated as a weapon of war in conflict zones. Women are exploited, and their feminity is used against them as a weapon, and Indian Army troops deployed in Indian occupied Kashmir are leaving no stone unturned to harm and disgrace the Kashmiri Community by raping and harassing their women. Women living in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir are the main consideration. 11 in-depth interviews were conducted with the native Kashmiris living in Indian held Jammu and Kashmir. Ethno National Conflict theory was employed to further understand the entire scenario. Findings of the research study suggest that Kashmiris are suffering under the tranny and illegal oppression of the Indian army and the brutal policies. Women are indeed treated and ill-treated as a weapon of war in conflict zones like Kashmir, and ethnic cleansing has been a major goal of the India army in Indian held Kashmir.*

Key Words: Women, Weapon of War, Conflict Zones, Indian Held Kashmir

Introduction

This research study tends to explain and understand the way women are treated in conflict zones. Women are stereotypically considered a weaker part of society and most fragile as well, and undoubtedly treated in the worst possible way in the conflict zones. Previous researches show that heinous crimes like harassment, rape, sexual assault are committed against women, and the men are tortured and humiliated as apparently hurting women causes shame, and they lose honor. Indian held Kashmir is a prominent example of a conflict zone, and for over 70 years, people over there are suffering oppression under the tranny of Indian forces.

This research study has further attempted to explain the feelings and psychological conditions of Kashmiris living in Indian held Kashmir. Korbel (1954), in his book, has narrated the entire historical perspective of the Kashmir conflict. He has mentioned the reasons behind the emergence of armed conflict in Kashmir and the negative consequences it has inflicted upon the people of Kashmir. Detailed content analysis was conducted of the available data to give a credible account of the entire conflict. Schofield (1996) in her book, has given a detailed account of Kashmir's struggle towards independence and self-determination and its resistance towards the oppression of Indian rule and brutality. It provides an account of the bravery of the Kashmiri people and the role of the international world towards peacemaking in Kashmir.

According to another study conducted by Hoffman and Duschinski (2013), people living in conflict zones learn to adapt to the situation and start considering it to be normal. The basic aim of this research study was to keenly understand whether the implementation of strict rules and regulations in Indian held Kashmir the only solution one could think off to bring stability in the region.

Rape and sexual harassment in war zones are tools used for ethnic cleansing and effects women in the worst possible ways. United Nations accept them as a threat to individual security and life in conflict areas, and this now has given a new shape to the way such crimes are viewed in Kashmir and Sri Lanka (Chakraborty & Ganguly, 2013). Kashmir is a disputed territory between two sovereign states,

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India and Pakistan. Kashmir was considered to be a heaven on this earth, but unfortunately, it suffered much brutality and hardships just because no one stood for it. Rape, murder, sexual violence, harassment, kidnappings and fake encounters are very common practices in Kashmir. Indian paramilitary forces are leaving no stone unturned in giving torture to innocent Kashmiri Muslims. This research study has further explained that basic human rights are actually snatched from Kashmiris, and they are forced to live in slavery.

The dispute over Kashmir is a prolonged phenomenon that seems impossible to get solved without the consent and efforts of the Indian government and the international world. Kashmiri people are fighting for freedom and achieving their right to self-determination. It has caused blindness for many. Rape and sexual violence are other deadly weapons used by the Indian armed forces to scrutinize and torture the helpless Kashmiris. Much effort has been laid in this regard, but less has been gained due to the overall increasing threat of terrorism, which is affiliated with Muslims and Pakistan. (Rollier, 2011).

Significance of the Study

Much work has been done regarding Indian Occupied Kashmir, but less focus has been on analyzing the hardships women face in conflict zone like Indian held Kashmir. This Qualitative research study will explore this angle and will fill the gap. The focus is on getting in-depth responses from native Kashmiris regarding their views on whether women are used as weapon in conflict zones like Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the atrocities faced by Kashmiri women
- To take the stance of native Kashmiris women on their sufferings and recommend probable solutions for it.

Research Questions

Q1. How do the women of Kashmir feel about their circumstances?
Q2. To what extent are women socially marginalized in Kashmir?

Hypotheses

1. Kashmiri women are treated as weapons of war by the deployed Indian armed forces.
2. There has been an increase in the rate of sexual assault towards Kashmiri women.

Literature Review

War on terror is an ongoing global phenomenon. It's a threat to many countries. The stance from Islamic parties from South Asia is often highlighted and reported in the Urdu press, whereas much less is covered by the English press, which is read globally. Content Analysis was conducted. One of the leading protesting parties actively working in Pakistan is the Jama'at-e-Islami. Its affiliation with the war on terror is making the world sceptical about its performance and activities (Nazar, 2016).

Ray and Anasuya (2017) examined the Afghan conflict and the violence which was inflicted upon innocent people during the war. The Afghan conflict has a deep rooted history. Foreign occupation of America over it for many years led to the intense brutality and severe blood shed that any country could have faced ever. Qualitative research methodology was used. It explores the brutality faced by people during (1978-2012). 40 in-depth interviews were conducted in Kabul within a period of six months in 2012. Phenomenological framework was employed to analyze how the violence became part of the routine of Afghani life. Concept of Identity of youth in areas where political conflict prevails tends to restrict opportunities for youth and narrow downs the scope of their personality development. It could also be considered useful in order to maintain stability in certain situations (Hammack, 2010).

This book written by Heineman (2011) very well explained the historical background of sexual violence in conflict zones. Sexual violence and rape are used as a weapon of ethnic cleansing in many conflicts. The victims and often the observers reveal the brutal form of sexual violence that has taken place in Abu Gharib Jail, Guantanamo Bay, and many other jails. In countries like Bosnia, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, Palestine and Uganda etc.

Many different movies have been made on Kashmir, in which Kashmiri militants are portrayed negatively often as terrorist affiliated with international terrorist organizations and supported by Pakistan. Haider which is an Indian movie was a remake of Hamlet in the context of Kashmir. Kashmir has under gone serious crises since 1990 with the implementation of 'Armed Forces Special Powers Act'. The entire situation is presented in the movie. Sudden disappearances, rape, kidnapping, murder and torture is well depicted in the movie. Content analysis of the movie was done to understand what it depicts (Young, 2017).

Gender roles have been predefined in most of the societies. Women are more likely to do household chores while men go out to work. Gender roles are disturbed during war situations as well like the one that prevails in Sri Lanka. The findings clearly suggested that such a reversal of roles and responsibilities seems impossible in Sri Lanka as war and conflict has become an indispensable part of the society (Rajasingham & Senanayake, 2004).

Women in Kashmir valley were often represented as weak and oppressed. They were stereotyped as victims who suffer violence, oppression and terror at the hands of the Indian army. This research study aims at understanding the different roles attached to each gender in conflict zones. Qualitative content analysis was conducted. Women roles have been marginalized in such a scenario. The role of women in peace scenario and in the maintenance of stability was also analyzed (Majumda & Khan, 2014).

This research study carefully analyzed the way Muslim Political Women are portrayed in foreign news magazines. Content analysis of two leading magazines, "Times and Newsweek," was conducted. Muslim political leaders were represented in a certain direction except for the first female prime minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. The study aims at keenly understanding whether the Muslim political leaders were stereotyped into specific gender roles and were these roles attached to religion in some way or not. Women leaders, and especially Muslim women leaders, have played a tremendous role in different struggles (Rahman, 2010).

Media has emerged and grown as a giant that has the capacity to either make or break any one's image and personality. Western media has done somewhat similar to Muslim women, especially after 9/11. They are judged by their physical attire and dressing. The aim of this research study was to identify how western newsmagazines framed Muslim women and how this affected the perception of the world. Content analysis of two leading newsmagazines was done. "Times and Newsweek" was selected. The findings suggest that different Muslim women were portrayed differently in these magazines (Khan & Zahra, 2015).

Women have been extremely influential and active in the brutal and undying struggle of Kashmir for ages. This research study highlights many such dynamic and brave women who have left no stone unturned in their efforts and have left a golden mark in history and some continue to inspire the world from their hard work and dedication. Women are often considered to be weak targets of oppression and brutality. Rape and sexual harassment are used as a weapon of ethnic cleansing' and failure of morality, especially in the conflict zones, where one powerful country has invaded the weaker country, in this case, it's India and Kashmir. Women have taken the initiative to raise their voice and speak out loud about the injustice that's prevailing in the Kashmir valley and has taken actions against it. Content analysis was conducted. The basic aim of this research study was to understand any possible way through which the lives of Kashmiri women can be improved. The answer lies in the larger context of the conflict and cannot be dealt with in isolation (Khurshid, 2016).

Kashmir has been struggling for its fundamental rights for a long, but in the year 1989, there was a drastic change in their demand. They started demanding complete freedom from Indian occupation. Young enthusiastic leaders took over Kashmir and replaced the old leaders with them. With it came a new wave of thinking. Many changes in politics followed. One of the major change was the appointment of Jagmohan Singh as governor of Kashmir. Soon after his appointment, the armed

conflict started in India. Many efforts by the Indian government to maintain peace have failed in the valley (Tremblay, 1996).

The fundamental rights of an individual and a nation include safety, security, freedom and assurance of the fulfilment of needs. Sexual harassment and rape are common practices, and women particularly are suffering terribly in Kashmir. This research study aims at understanding the real problems faced by Kashmiri women and the torturous activities of the Indian army. There is no check and balance maintained on them (Abid & Ashfaq, 2017).

The dispute over Kashmir is a prolonged phenomenon that seems impossible to get solved without the consent and efforts of the Indian government and the international world. Rape and sexual violence are other deadly weapons used by the Indian armed forces to scrutinize and torture the helpless Kashmiris. Much effort has been laid in this regard, but less has been gained due to the overall increasing threat of terrorism, which is affiliated with Muslims and Pakistan. Terrorism has become an alarming global giant, and its interlinked networks have spread it everywhere (Rollier, 2011).

Torture can take many forms. There can be legal and illegal ways of giving torture to someone, and there could be different levels of tortures as well. This research study further explains different types of tortures that prevail in Kashmir. Since 1990 when the Indian army came and settled in Kashmir, the entire scenario changed. The worst form of torture could be witnessed in Kashmir valley. Kidnapping, rape, sexual harassment, interrogation, bribe, physical torture and humiliation are some of the tortures that could be listed down (Haq, 2017).

NGO's are playing a phenomenal role in most of the societies, and they are helping the societies to develop and progress. They are often seen with a sceptical eye and suspicion and are accountable for their activities to the government. Qualitative analysis was conducted of different frames that were involved. The findings suggest that mostly Ngo's are represented positively in the media, and its role is appreciated (Desouza, 2010).

This research article aims at understanding the feelings and discontent of young Kashmiris when they are suffering brutality at the hands of the Indian forces. Students from Kashmir Universities and young activist, both male and female, are striving hard to get rid of this, but there lies a serious threat for the females whose honor and respect might be put at stake. This feeling of humiliation and fear has actually given strength to the young people, and now they are trying to show their aggression. It was ethnographic research. The findings suggest that with the overall increase in the significance given to the youth-related programs, constraints against Kashmiri youth are also highlighted (Molen & Bal, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Ethnonational Conflict theory seems most appropriate in reference to the given topic as it will explain in detail the interstate conflict and its root causes. Wolff (2011) highlighted the significance of managing and monitoring the Ethno National conflicts between states based on the diversity of their culture and religion. Conflicts that arise between different groups lead to chaos. Rouhana and Tal (1998) conducted a research study in which they analyzed the importance of psychological interference in resolving ethnonational Conflicts, there focus was on the Israil-Palastine Conflict.

Wood, Schertzer and Kaufmann (2011) explained in their research study the ways ethno National conflict can be curtailed and resolved. The focus on the root causes of conflict and then keenly recommend solutions.

Methodology

In-Depth Interviews

Leydon, Boulton, Moynihan, Jones, Mossman, Boudioni & McPherson (2000) conducted in-depth interviews with 17 cancer patients who are diagnosed within a period of six months in order to understand that why these patients are not really willing to gain detailed information about their medical and physical conditions. Tong, Lowe, Sainsbury and Craig (2010) conducted in-depth interviews with 20 parents whose children were suffering from kidney disease. Respondents were asked how they feel about all this and how they take care of their children. Findings suggest that

parents leave no stone unturned in their struggle to help and nurture their kids in the best possible ways. Hine (1996) conducted in-depth interviews to examine in detail how the people who normally walk on road feel about the excessive traffic. This is the most suitable methodology that could be used in order to understand the changes that are observed in people. Mollen, Barg, Hayes, Gotcsik, Blades and Schwarz (2008) used in depth interviews in their research in order to understand whether black females between the ages of 15-19 were aware of the contraceptives and their uses. 30 respondents belonging to the urban female population were interviewed.

Data Collection

Demographics of Interviewees of In-depth Interview

Names	Age	Area	Education	Occupation
Respondent 1	29	Baramullah	PhD	Teacher
Respondent 2	27	Bandi Pora,	PhD	Student
Respondent 3	25	Anantnag,	MA.	Students
Respondent 4	29	Srinagar	PhD	Student
Respondent 5	32	Anantnag	LLB	Advocate
Respondent 6	32	Anantnag	MA LL.B	Advocate
Respondent 7	32	Kashmir	PhD	Student
Respondent 8	27	Baramulla	MA Urdu	Private Job
Respondent 9	24	Baramulla	MBA	Student
Respondent 10	24	Shopian	Graduate	Student
Respondent 11	29	Srinagar	Post Graduate	Student

Q1. What insecurities do women face in Indian held Jammu and Kashmir, and how do they cope with them?

Respondent 1.

Stated that, “In a conflict zone, women are the most vulnerable victims of terror and brutality. Similar is the situation in Indian occupied Kashmir. Women considered the best weapon to humiliate and terrorize the population. The most recent incident of rape and brutal murder of 8 years old girl Asifa is an example of this. Asifa belonged to Bakarwal (Nomad) family, the criminals (those who raped her) wanted to eradicate those people from that area therefore they planned this heinous crime and committed it shamelessly.

Respondent 2.

Stated that, “Women often suffer harassment and abuse in Kashmir and this can happen anytime with them. There is high level of insecurity among women. Indian army considers Kashmiris to be their enemies as they support extension towards Pakistan, so they consider it their right to humiliate and abuse the Kashmiri community without any fear of accountability or questioning. A huge army has been imposed on Kashmiris, and they are told to control ‘armless Kashmiris ’by any mean possible so that they encourage them to do whatever they want. They consider Kashmiri women as objects that they can use and gain pleasure. They can enter any house, arrest the men and rape women fearlessly or harass them in public openly”.

Respondent 3.

Stated that, “The army has committed ruthless crimes against all sections of the people, and women have been no exception. The women have been raped, killed, abducted and used as human shields. There have been cases of mass rapes as well. The twin villages of Kunan and Poshpora have witnessed this wrath of the State. The rapes have taken place in thousands, with the victim’s still awaiting justice while the perpetrators have been left free, with total impunity. During Crackdowns and cordons, the menfolk are separated from the women folk. This makes women highly insecure. Their personal

wardrobes and their rooms are searched through. In one of the villages, a lady's private things were taken out by army personnel from her wardrobe. Kashmir has a section of women who have a unique but pathetic identity of their own. They are called Half-Widows and Half-Mothers. Some of these women, Parveena Ahangar one among them, started protesting over such disappearances every month. Later they formed the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, which demands the investigation into the cases of missing persons".

Respondent 4.

Stated that, "I think there is no separate answer for it, I have already answered it somehow. Obviously your minority status increases the insecurities and makes your life difficult".

Respondent 5.

Stated that, "Kashmir has military rule, there is no legal system in Kashmir as it should have been, therefore the army is not accountable to anyone because all that comes under their duty. They cannot be prosecuted in the court and no one stand against them. Search operations are normal and regularly happening in Kashmir that the forces enter the houses during night time, asks everyone to move out and line up in different places gender wise and then they search their homes, take valuable stuff from their houses and mistreat women. This is a common practice and our women have to undergo such situation often. Army men often beat them, harass them or rape them. There are many incidents where rapes are done against women because women are often alone at homes. Kunnan Poshpora and Asiya Nilofer case of Shopian are the major examples of this. Women are undoubtedly more vulnerable in conflict zones and often suffer. An enemy is an enemy and raping women is the most important and painful method they can use against the Kashmiri society in order to crush their identity. Women are the easiest target for them. Very few cases are reported". Respondent 6: Stated that, "Women are the worst victims of any conflict. Molestation, rape, half mothers, widows, half widows etc. are forms of humiliation and torture which have been widely practised by Indian armed forces on women in State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is difficult to cope with the fear and insecurities as forces are always armed and enjoy impunity from the government".

Respondent 7.

Stated that, "There is no doubt in this that Woman suffers many types of insecurities in our society. The intensity of these insecurities increased during a prolonged conflict situation and illegal occupation by an army in Kashmir. Women often fear to go out of their houses at night; they fear to be harassed by the Indian army".

Respondent 8.

Stated that, "It is unsafe for women to move out of their houses in the evening; they are more vulnerable at that time. They should either be accompanied by their fathers or brothers when they go out. They are often victims of abuse and harassment. During day time the situation is a bit better. The worst incident of massive rape and killing happened in Kunnan Poshpora, and there are several other examples of such crimes as well. Several books have been written on it".

Respondent 9.

Stated that, "As you might know that under a conflict situation, each and every member suffers. There is no doubt in this that women are more vulnerable in such situations. They can easily be harmed and harming and dishonoring them is like dishonoring and humiliating the sentiments and ego of the entire community. Considering the situation prevailing in Kashmir, Indian army considers Kashmiris to be their enemy so they leave no stone unturned to harm them. The men have become a bit more protective towards their women".

Respondent 10.

Stated that, "Well women would answer this question in a better way. But living in Kashmir along with

our families we have to show some extra care towards the female members of our family and community. The reason is that they are comparatively more vulnerable".

Respondent 11.

Stated that, "Women are always prone to violence in conflict ridden Kashmir, as occupied forces harassed them number of times. Women who have high status in Islam are witnessing disgrace in conflict zone. The nocturnal raids, CASO's and search operations all are attacks on the modesty of women. How can we talk of the security of women in Kashmir when we had witnessed the unfortunate mass rape incident that happened in Kunnan Poshpora in Kupwara in which 40 women lost their modesty? When we talk of insecurity in a conflict zone, we should talk of these raids that mostly happen in the lap of darkness, in which women are taken out of their bed and thrown outside the home in the name of the search."

After listening to the entire respondent's, researcher have concluded that women are extremely unsafe and vulnerable in conflict zones like Kashmir. There personal security and dignity are put at stake.

Q2: Give your opinion regarding the usage of women as weapons of war in conflict zones? What role is a local NGO like Dukhtaran-e-Millat playing in this regard?

Respondent 1.

Stated that, "It seems like that the international peacekeeping organizations are somehow ignoring the conflicting areas well-being and stability. UNO isn't playing a positive and effective role in resolving such issues, although it does have the potential to do so. But it might have some restrictions and some international pressures. Social media's role here in spreading awareness regarding the intense situation prevailing in Kashmir should be well appreciated actually. This issue has been raised in UN meetings; it will take time as it is not the only burning issue; there are others as well. What happens in Palestine, where journalists are killed? If efforts continued, there is hope that a solution might come".

Respondent 2.

Stated that, "In any conflict zone, women have been easily targeted and Jammu and Kashmir being no exception in that case. Right from the inception of the movement against Indian brutal regime in 1947 and particularly from 1989, the Indian State has been perpetuating heinous crimes against humanity and women in particular. So, in Kashmir context, women have been used as a weapon of war by the Indian armed forces to terrorize the male population. This brutal method has been used to create fear psychosis against the male folk of Jammu and Kashmir so that they may not rise against Indian rule. There are hundreds of cases like Kunan Poshpora mass gang-rape where a seventy-year-old lady was not spared by the wild beasts that were in uniform. The case of Mubeena, who was a bride, was gang-raped. The case of Shopiana rape and double murder case where Asiya and Neelofar was gang raped and then killed. There are countless incidents where these things have happened.

Regarding the role of Dukhtaran-e-Milllat, for me, the party is doing work in Kashmir, mostly at religious and political front. Dukhtaran-e-Millat is not an NGO, but a socio-religious political party working for right to self-determination of the people of Kashmir. It works on religious and political front where its members work at grass root level on social issues also regarding women. I have no idea about how many State sponsored NGO's are working in Kashmir related to women issues".

Respondent 3.

Stated that, "Women in Kashmir have faced a lot of trouble because of the conflict. They have been subjected to a number of war crimes committed by the Indian army to subjugate the Kashmiris. Indian army has used rape as a political tool. The recent rape of a minor girl in Kuthwa, Jammu Division was done to force Muslim Bakerwals (Shepherds) to leave the forest gazing lands. There have been cases of mass rapes that have taken place in Kashmir. The twin villages of Kunan and Poshpora have

witnessed such a wrath of the State. In these two villages, the men folk were segregated from the women folk during a crackdown".

Respondent 4.

Stated that, "See I don't subscribe to the ideology of DeM, so I won't be able to identify any positive thing regarding them, even if they do something remarkable. You should have a look at this book "Qaidi number100" written by another Hurriyat activist, it might give you a better idea about the situation. Asiya Andarabi is no doubt a strong woman and holds a significant position in Kashmir, so media is actively giving coverage to her".

Respondent 5.

Stated that, "I can with certainty tell you that very few people are given access to Kashmir, and in cases, they are given access that is conditional. Kashmir is a huge area with 22 districts, and 17 of the districts are severely hit by the conflict. South Kashmir is near the border and is highly volatile. Most of the population is Muslims, and most of the area is covered by villages. There are very few big cities. These areas are not accessible by human rights organizations. They are unable to work on ground in Kashmir, simply because they are not allowed to".

Respondent 6.

Stated that, "True that women are used as weapons of war in conflict zones. Molestation, rape is being used as a tool by armed forces to suppress the demand for right to self-determination. NGO's like Dukhtaran-e- Millat have a very little say as they mostly remain house arrested or imprisoned. International organizations hardly repost from Kashmir. Kashmir is a disputed territory but it does have UN office in the capital of State. At the times of uprising even UN is of no help and maintain silence".

Respondent 7.

Stated that, "No Comments on Dukhtaran- e -Millat and its working. Other International organizations try to show and highlight the real issue of Kashmir, but often they have to face many hurdles and barriers as it's not that easy to enter in Kashmir".

Respondent 8.

Stated that, "There is no doubt in that women are easy targets in conflict situations as their pride is affiliated with the pride of their community and society. They are considered as the weakest segment of the enemies force. The incident of Kunan Poshpora and many others are example of such brutality. The survivors explain the trauma that they suffered during and after that phase".

Respondent 9.

Stated that, "Many local NGO's works here and help the people during curfew situation. They provide moral and medical support and assistance to people in need. During the prolonged unrest of 2016, curfew stayed for more than 100days, local volunteers played an important part and helped the people around. Similarly, Dukhtaran –e- Millat is playing an important role, especially towards the well-being and security of women. They do counseling; they support the rape victims and protest for them to gain justice".

Respondent 10.

Stated that "Women are used as weapons of war in conflict zones is a misogyny statement that suggests Kashmiri women don't understand that under the Indian occupation they're unable to make free choices. This is actually not true; violence against women by Indian rule is the weapon of war".

Respondent 11.

Stated that, "Women in every conflict zone are prone to violence as the forces harassed women in

order to suppress the struggle movement of Kashmiris. But Dukhtaran-e-Millat plays a gigantic role in this hour in order to highlight the Kashmir issue and particularly the issues of women in Kashmir. Women folk are mostly engaged in their house works and had less knowledge of the Kashmir issue but thanks to Dukhtaran-e-Millat who took the responsibility in this grim situation and make awareness in the women folk. Now we witness that women play an important role in the Kashmir struggle all because of Dukhtaran-e-Millat. There are also some NGO's that provide their services at their level".

Discussion

Kashmir Conflict has deep roots and it has become crucial over time. The situation has become worse yet no effort has been rendered in this regard to improve the situation. The conflict over the accession of Kashmir valley started when India was divided into two parts in 1947 and then emerged two independent countries namely India and Pakistan. Kashmir had Muslim majority and Kashmiri people wanted to join Pakistan, which was an Islamic country but the ruler was a Hindu and had preferred first to remain as an independent sovereign state, when this seemed difficult then was willing to join India. Hashmi and Sajid (2017) explained the nature of Kashmir conflict, its origin and transformation in much detail. It started right after the separation of India and Pakistan. This gave birth to the dissatisfaction among Kashmiris and led to vast uprising. United Nations intervened to draw a solution, after negotiation they decided that plebiscite would be held in Kashmir and people would be given the right to decide for themselves.

D'Souza and Routray (2016) tend to explain that Kashmiri people have been struggling to gain independence and freedom from Indian rule. There has been a steady change in the way they retaliate now. Najam (2017) tried to explain that power and authority can only help to gain control of land, but the heart and aspirations of Kashmiris couldn't be crushed, their heart remains free to desire freedom. Regarding the Research question, "How do the Kashmiri women feel about their circumstances?" Yousaf and Jawaid (2014) highlighted that scrutiny over Muslim youth and especially over women has increased since the incident of the 9/11 Twin tower attack took place. Respondents believed that youth suffer the most in such a situation as their aspirations and future is put at stake in a conflict situation. Respondent 2 stated that "Of course, any conflict zone is marred by difficulties, But then that conflict zone has to be properly contextualized so that effects of conflict can be properly understood". Their education, career and lives are harmed by the control of Indian army. Kashmiri Women are the worst victims of abuse, torture and harassment. Respondent 7 stated that, "The Indian media has completely distorted the image of Kashmir and the Kashmiri sentiments. Youth are framed as militants and terrorist and are shown as creating disturbance in the valley. Nabeel, Riaz and Muneer (2016) explained that extreme brutality has made women life even harder and they are constantly undergoing abuse and violence.

This research study deeply answered the research question, "To what extent are women socially marginalized in Kashmir? Considering the entire situation through literature review and the data collection, it can be concluded that women are "socially marginalized and deprived in Kashmir and that also is reflected upon the coverage of women related issues in the three selected newspapers. They are harassed, abused, tortured and snubbed. Majumda & Khan (2014) endorsed this in their research study, women are labeled as "weak and fragile" and some specific roles are often affiliated with them that further harms and deteriorate their personalities. Most crimes committed against them often go unreported. Respondent 2 said that, "There is high level of insecurity among women. Most of the respondents said that they believe that women are "most vulnerable" in a conflict situation and are treated as an object to take revenge from the enemies. Women mostly suffer harassment, rape, violence, physical and verbal abuse and are often used by Indian army to blackmail the male members of their families in Kashmir. Respondent 1 stated that, "Sexual harassment and physical abuse are common practices that take place in Kashmir. Many cruel laws like APSA has given complete freedom to the Indian army to do anything (whatever it maybe) to maintain control and stability in the Kashmir valley". Women often suffer "sexual and physical torture" at the hands of powerful men during a conflict situation. They are often raped, beaten and tortured. Similar is the situation of the women in Kashmir (Noor, 2016). Respondent 2 stated that, "There are hundreds of cases like Kunan Poshpora mass gang rape where a seventy year old lady was not spared by the wild beasts that were in uniform.

The case of Mubeena who was a bride was gang raped. The case of Shopiana rape and double murder case where Asiya and Neelofar was gang raped and then killed. There are countless incidents where these things have happened".

Respondent 6 stated that, "Molestation, rape, half mothers, widows, half widows etc. are forms of humiliation and torture which has been widely practiced by Indian armed forces on women in State of Jammu and Kashmir. Respondent 1stated that, "It seems like that the international peace keeping organizations are somehow ignoring the conflicting areas well-being and stability". Respondent 3 stated that, "During Crackdowns and cordons, the men folk are separated from the women folk. This makes women highly insecure. Women have been living under such circumstances since a long time, and they feel terrible about it. The majority of the respondents were males, and just 2 were females, but when asked about the harassment, they unanimously agreed that incidents of harassment and abuse are part of their routine now. Their personal wardrobes and their rooms are searched through. In one of the villages, a lady's private things were taken out by army personnel from her wardrobe". Respondent 4 who was a female stated that, "Yes, harassment did happen, as the Indian army say very often say some unpleasant and sexually exploiting and gestures when we pass by them. They made sexually explicit sounds and sometimes even took off their pants in front of us". Respondent 1 stated that, "In a conflict zone, women are the most vulnerable victims of terror and brutality. Women considered the best weapon to humiliate and terrorize the population. The most recent incident of rape and brutal murder of 8 years old girl Asifa is an example of this".

Respondent 2 stated that "Dukhtaran-e-Millat is not an NGO, but a socio-religious political party working for the right to self-determination of the people of Kashmir. It works on the religious and political front where its members work at grass root level on social issues also regarding women". Respondent 3 further supported Dukhtaran-e-Millat and said that "It has voiced the concerns of the women entangled in the conflict and has called for an end to the occupation to make an end to such heinous crimes".

Conclusion

This research study was conducted in order to understand how youth are portrayed in the Kashmir conflict. In-depth interviews from 11 Kashmiris were conducted in order to get detailed information about how they feel about their situation, what really is happening in Kashmir and what are their recommendations for the betterment of Kashmir. It was a semi-structured interview, and a snowball sampling strategy was used. In-depth, interviews were transcribed and later explained in the discussion part along with the results of the quantitative content analysis.

Kashmir conflict is a dispute over a piece of land between India and Pakistan and has started right since the partition of the subcontinent. There is a high rate of human rights violations prevailing in Kashmir, and the plight and sufferings of innocent Kashmiris still remains unheard by the world human right organizations like 'United Nations', 'Amnesty International' and other policymakers. Kashmiri women particularly suffer at the worst in Kashmir as rapes and sexual assault is undoubtedly used as weapon of war and is particularly used for ethnic cleansing due to religious hatred that Indians have against Muslims. In depth, Interviews gave the researcher a detailed insight into the issue and helped to understand what Kashmiri's in general and Kashmiri women, in particular, are facing. It's high time for UNO to take a stand.

Recommendations

- Kashmir issue could only be solved when India and Pakistan start considering the sentiments and feelings of native Kashmiris.
- Kashmiris should be given the right to self-determination; plebiscite should be held and they should be the one to decide their future.
- Indians should admit that it is a political issue between the two countries and should not hide it behind excuses.

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